

THE

HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

JULY 2006

JULY HAPPENINGS

The July meeting of the Hancock County Historical Society will be held on Thursday, July 20th, at 12: 00 noon. The speaker will be City Councilman, Jim Thriffiley .Please call for reservations at 467-4090. The cost of the meal is \$7.00 payable at the door.

We now have a new air conditioning unit at Lobrano House, so we are assured of having a "cool" luncheon.

At the monthly board meeting a decision was made to reinstate the annual Cemetery Tour on Halloween night. If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please call us. We need actors/actresses, tour guides, hostesses and anyone who will give us an hour or two of time.

If you are looking for something to do, or just want to get away for the day, check out Gulf Coast Transportation's ad on page 7. They have some great trips planned for the near future.

NEW MEMBERS

Iris Davis McConnell, Pensacola
Jane Alford, BSL
O.T. Riggs, Mt. Pleasant, Tx



WATERWAYS OF HANCOCK COUNTY

LAKES, MARSHES, BAYOUS

**The History of Hancock
County, compiled by the Works
Progress Administration: Pub-
lished in co-operation with The
Hancock County Chamber of
Commerce**

Geographically speak-
ing Hancock County has no
lakes but the marshy section

in the southern part is subject
to tide inundation.

The marshes are fitted
only for tree growth but fur-
nish good grazing for cattle
when well drained lands are
dry and grass is parched. The
greater marshes are in the
southern part of the county
and lie along the banks of the
Jordan River and Choctaw
and Galere Bayous. The bay-
ous render the soil useless

THE

HISTORIAN

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Editor - Dale St. Amant

Published monthly by the

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MONDAY — FRIDAY
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MISSION STATEMENT

"TO PRESERVE THE GENERAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF HANCOCK COUNTY AND TO PRESERVE THE KATE LOBRANO HOUSE AND COLLECTIONS THEREIN; TO RESEARCH AND INTERPRET LIFE IN HANCOCK COUNTY; AND TO ENCOURAGE AN APPRECIATION OF AND INTEREST IN HISTORICAL PRESERVATION."

other than for re-forestation. Where climate is humid these wet lands affect the health of the people by rendering them more susceptible to bronchial or lung diseases.

**SPRINGS, WELLS, AND
MINERAL WATERS**

Springs abound in different sections of the county but none of them are of any great importance.

Tanico Spring is within the city limits of Bay St. Louis.

In 1905 a Mr. Matthews (now deceased) was interested in the development of this spring and had the water tested for health content which was not present. The spring has been abandoned.

Thirty years ago a spring at Lakeshore furnished drinking water for the pupils of a one teacher school there, but now Lakeshore has artesian water and the spring has fallen into disuse. Also in this section is an active spring between Lakeshore and Logtown, near the Catholic Church of Beat 1. It furnishes drinking water for the nearby residents.

In the eastern part of the county there is Ladner spring which still furnishes drinking water and out of which flows Beaver Creek. Mr. Ladner had the water analyzed but no mineral content was found.

In Gainesville is located two large springs. They are part of the water supply of this community and some women still use them as outdoor laundries.

In the eastern part of the county, Beat III, the water supply is furnished almost entirely from dug and pump wells.

The villages of Dedeaux, Sellers, Standard, Caesar Flat Top, Necaise Crossing and Leetown, have no other source of drinking water.

Through the central, eastern and southern portion of the county we find some ordinary wells, but there are also artesian wells at Catahoula, Kiln, Aaron Academy, Gravel Pit, Gainesville, Logtown, Pearlinton, Ansley, Clermont Harbor, Lakeshore, Waveland, Edwardsville and Bay St. Louis.

**THE WATER SYSTEM OF
BAY ST. LOUIS**

The artesian system of the Bay St. Louis county is in its youth. Only a few years ago did deep borings meet with success, and since that time the great fountain of artesian water has been tapped in many places, bringing the pure waters of the Cumberland mountains to meet the waters of the gulf. The wells already in use are cased to depths varying from three hundred to nine hundred feet.

The water works system of Bay St. Louis originated as a private enterprise, owned and maintained by Mr. Charles Sanger, an old inhabitant of this city. Before that time, however, a few private wells were scattered throughout the city. Mr. Sanger being one of the first few who owned an artesian well. By a gradual growth his well began to service his neighbors and consequently grew

into city wide water distribution system serving practically the entire populace, except however, those that still maintained the private wells.

Geographically speaking artesian water is found in what is commonly known as the 700, 900 and 1000 foot strata. Mr. Sanger being a construction engineer and contractor it is easy to see why, with even a limited amount of capital, he eventually became the owner of the water supply system.

The normal pressure of the wells at that time approximately was 20 pounds; the construction of 2 story buildings about the town necessarily drew heavily on the supply and consequently a reduction in pressure became acute. To offset this reduction in pressure it was necessary then to drill more wells. However, the consumption was increasing far more rapidly than even the potential supply. The normal well pressure was not sufficient to reach two story buildings, and insurance rates were rising to such a high rate as to make insurance prohibitive.

As a natural course of events that follows such cases public sentiment demanded increased pressure, more volume of water and a substantial reduction in insurance rates.

On the first day of June 1922, the City of Bay St. Louis purchased from Mr. Sanger "the entire system of water works, including all wells and all pipes, whether lying under the streets or sidewalks, on or under private property, and all plugs, valves, meters and connections," and also small parcels of lots located thereon, five artesian wells, aver-

aging in size from 2 1/2 to 4 1/4 inches in diameter.

After the purchase of the water system from Mr. Sanger, the City of Bay St. Louis, by means of a \$93,000 bond issue, established two adjacent reservoirs with a capacity of 325,000 gallons, one water tower, 75,000 gallon capacity, one pumping station, housing three electric hydraulic pumps, two 75 horse power, 850 gallons per minute, and one 30 horse power centrifugal electric pump, 240 gallon per minute. A gradual increase in the size of the mains follows. The replacement of all two and three inch wrought iron mains with 4, 6, and 8 inch cast iron mains has been the practice the past few years.

Adjacent to the newly constructed reservoirs two 6' artesian wells were established. These two wells flow approximately 350 and 400 gallons per minute each into the reservoir, the system is also served by eight other artesian wells which flow directly in the water mains. As a preservation of the life of each of the eight wells check valves are established at each well outlet as a necessary precautionary measure when the

tower pressure is in excess of the well pressure.

... From the original privately owned wells of Mr. Sanger to his own water distributing system to the present day has been a gradual, substantial and sound growth of the water supply of Bay St. Louis. Today our water facilities are as follows, to wit: a gravity direct and indirect pressure water system owned, operated and maintained by the City of Bay St. Louis one 325,000 gallon reservoir supplied by two artesian wells (20 pound pressure) of 350 and 400 gallons per minute. One 75,000 gallon pressure tank elevated 125 feet, 2 centrifugal pumps, capacity 850 gallons per minute and centrifugal pumps, capacity 850 gallons per minute, and miles of 2, 4, 6, and 8, inch each iron pipe, 167 double single fire hydrants. Gravity pressure, 45 pounds, fire pressure 118 pounds.

In addition to the water facilities owned by the City there are 26 private artesian wells, servicing seventy five individual homes and mercantile establishments.

The artesian water is soft and contains some sulphur, iodine, iron and magnesia but has no health content. There are no mineral waters in the county.

SOURCE: HCHS Vertical Files

**Hancock County Historical Society will
host the annual Cedar Rest Cemetery Tour
Halloween night 2006**

Volunteer and join the fun!

NAPOLEON COMMUNITY

The community of Napoleon was located near Gainesville on the Pearl River and is one of those "lost communities" pushed into oblivion by the space program in the early 1960's. S. G. Thigpen tells us, in an article written for the *Item* in June of '96: "There is a combination of romance, intrigue and mystery in the history of Napoleon Community and of how it got its name. The name came from the fact that Jerome Napoleon, brother of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte of France, once camped on the high banks of Pearl River just southwest of where Napoleon Baptist Church stood for years before being forced to move by the government.

The Emperor had been imprisoned on the Isle of Helena. His brother Jerome and others loyal to him plotted to rescue him from this prison. Due to the worldwide fame and the great prominence of the Emperor and because of his many enemies, the strictest secrecy was vital to the success of their plan. If Napoleon Bonaparte was to be rescued they needed a place of refuge for him, and that's where our interest in this story comes in.

Jerome and a few of his faithful and loyal followers set out to visit the New Orleans area where the Emperor was thought to have many faithful friends and followers. They slipped away from the coast of France disguised as ordinary cargo boat

and crew. They carried with them a usual cargo for those times but, known only to Jerome and those very closest to him, they also carried \$80,000 in gold, which they hoped to use to finance their clandestine operation in this area. They hoped that the great magic of the Bonaparte name, along with their skilful planning, would stamper this section of the banner of the Emperor and that they could establish a new nation here with him at its head.

The Bonapartes had friends, and known followers in the New Orleans area that they hoped to contact and from whom they hoped for enthusiastic aid. The voyage across the Atlantic Ocean was uneventful but they were warned of dangers in the Gulf of Mexico from pirates and free-booters, who infested those waters in those times. No ship that could not fight its way was safe there

When they entered the Gulf of Mexico they tried to hide by day and travel by night. They did not dare to try to go up the Mississippi river, which was by far the best way to go to New Orleans because of the buccaneers who were known to hover around the mouth of this great river. Neither did they dare to try to go by way of the Rigolets and Lake Pontchartrain because of the pirates and robbers who pounced on all ships in that area from their headquarters on Honey Island.

Their plan was to land on the Mississippi gulf coast and then work their way by secret and little used passages into the city of New Orleans. By skilful and careful planning and maneuvering, they make their way to land in the gen-

eral area of where Waveland now stands. They were met there by trusted aides, headed by Jeremiah Henley who lived at that time on Pearl River about a mile north of Walkiah Bluff. Jeremiah was sympathetic with, and had aided the French in their colonial arguments with Spain and as a reward had had his claim on Pearl River confirmed. Incidentally, this big tract of land on the river still goes on the record books of Pearl River County as the Jeremiah Henley Claim. Much information not recorded in history books has come down to us through the Henley family. H. V. Henley of Eureka, California, a descendant of Jeremiah Henley, wrote, "in 1811 Jeremiah Henley with a group of French partisans joined with some French volunteers to aid Napoleon in his war against Russia. They sailed for France in time to be integrated into the French army that was to invade Russia. They were soldiers in Napoleon's grand Army that marched to Moscow, the Russian Capitol. They stayed in Moscow less than two months. In the terrible march back to France in the extreme cold and snow of a Russian winter, many of these soldiers from America were among those who lost their lives from cold and disease. My grandmother told me of Jeremiah Henley's description of this retreat from Moscow when the snow along the line of march was dyed red by the bleeding feet of the soldiers. Out of the 500,000 soldiers who went to Moscow, Jeremiah was one of the very few who returned. He had not been back very long before the French agents contacted him because of his known sympathies for France

and asked that he organize a party to meet the French conspirators.

The French group was met by Jeremiah Henley and his aids at the appointed place where Waveland now stands with pack mules and supplies for the trip to a prearranged and prepared hiding place on the banks of East Pearl River just southwest of where old Napoleon church stood

Utmost secrecy was necessary as Jerome Napoleon, known world-wide as Bonaparte's brother, was at the head of the French group and would have been a great prize if captured. And too, the Frenchman carried with them \$80,000 in gold, which the numerous bandits in the general area must now know about.

The French with their

American guides and protectors arrived at their prepared hiding place under two big old live oaks in a jungle thickness of wild growth about 1000 feet east of Pearl River. All signs of their entrance were carefully eradicated. As they were getting settled into the camp one of the mules brayed. He was killed instantly as they knew that if any of the many pirates infesting the river and nearby swamps heard the mule, they would promptly investigate. They immediately buried it as they wanted no tell-tale buzzards informing the bandits of their location..

Jerome had with him only men in whom he had the greatest trust, yet he realized the great temptation that a great sum of gold of-

fered to even the most trusted men to desert him and try to take the money for themselves. It is said he went through the pretense of burying the gold a kittle way from their camp, but that he and his most trusted lieutenant slipped out on the darkest night and buried it in another place so that only the two of them knew where it was. Up to this day no one knows whether they ever came back for it.

They now made their plans to try to slip into New Orleans to contact their friends. Pearl River with its many passages was dominated and controlled by one of the most dangerous gangs of criminals ever to operate in the gulf coast area. Honey island was the headquarters for this gang. They would make raids in fast boats into the



The Way We Were
A watercolor by Kathe Calhoun.



A nostalgic look at Bay St. Louis before the Storm

Prints (16" x 23") are available for \$20. Prints will be sold at St. Rose de Lima Catholic Church, 301 S. Necaie, Bay St. Louis or by phone, 228 467-7347. Shipping charges are \$5.00. Prints are also available at Behold Fine Art and Framing 835 Highway 90 Bay St. Louis. Proceeds go to St. Rose de Lima Capital Campaign Fund.

Gulf and even into new Orleans itself, going in and out through little known and secret passages, to and from their hideouts up and down the Pearl River. They maintained several hideouts so that they would have others to go to. One such hideout was said to be across from Nicholson.

The leader of these criminals was Pierre Rameau who was widely known as the King of Honey island. He was born and reared in Scotland and came from a good family, but as it often is the case, he took the easy way to

make money becoming a brigand and a pirate. His real name was McCollough, but he operated under the name of Pierre Rameau from Honey island in his illegal activities. In New Orleans he maintained one of the city's finest homes under the name of col. Loring, who passed as a mine owner and operator from Mexico. It was common knowledge that many of the greatest fortunes in new Orleans in early times came from illegal activities.

It is said that Pierre

Rameau often made raids and pulled off robberies in Louisiana and Mississippi, one at Waveland being minutely described. In this robbery, gems of great value were taken from the owner after which he was tied up in the house and the house set on fire.

Jerome trusted the Americans. To get by the Honey Island thieves, they had to be very secretive.

(CON. NEXT MONTH)

Source: HCHS Vertical Files

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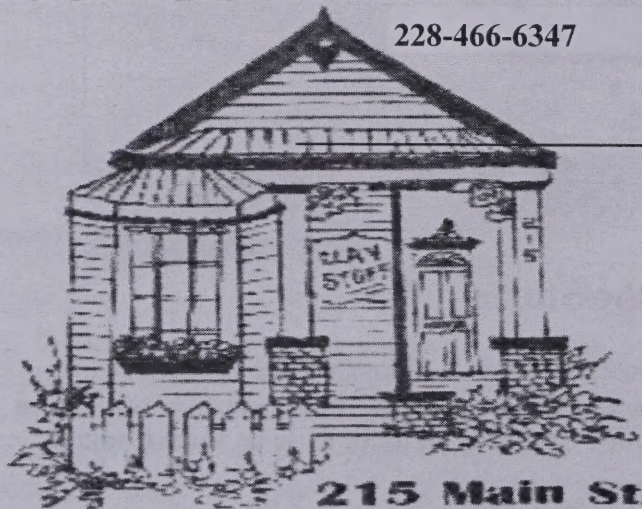
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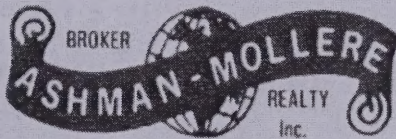
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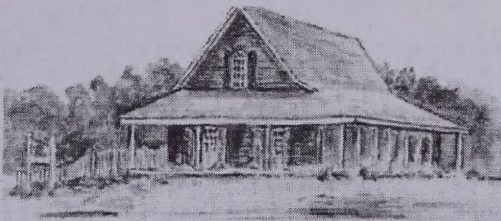
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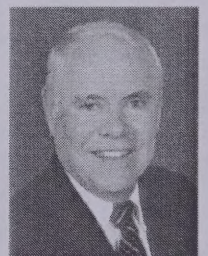
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